CHRISTOPHER REEVE PARALYSIS FOUNDATION

February 17, 2005

The Honorable Michael Castle The Honorable Diana DeGette U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Castle and DeGette:

On behalf of the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, thank you for your strong leadership to advance embryonic stem cell research. The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, H.R. 810, expands federal support for human stem cell research. Christopher Reeve often said he wished to live in a world where politics did not stand in the way of hope. Your legislation is a great step in building strong bi-partisan support.

Embryonic stem cell research holds the promise of developing a better understanding of disease and disease development, as well as the potential to treat and maybe cure diseases and disorders such as spinal cord injuries, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS, and many more.

As you know, President Bush called for federal funding of embryonic stem cell research on lines derived before his executive order was issued August 9, 2001. At the time, the Administration estimated that 78 stem cell lines would qualify for federal funds. More than three years later there are 22 lines available on the National Institutes of Health stem cell registry. Scientists in the United States have serious concerns about entering a field with funding restrictions and we're beginning to see clear signs that they are moving overseas where there are more supportive policies. These factors, added to the recent revelations that the approved stem cell lines are contaminated with mouse feeder cells, (making their therapeutic use for humans uncertain) raise serious questions about the current U.S. policy.

The Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation supports expanded federal support for embryonic stem cell research with oversight and regulations to ensure we move forward as vigorously as possible. The astounding number of original co-sponsors, as well as the bipartisanship of the support is a testament to the widespread optimism about stem cell research.

Thank you again for your leadership, and we look forward to working with you this Congress.

Sincerely,

Michael Manganielld

Senior Vice President, Government Relations

500 Mortic Avenue. Springfield. NJ 07081 . 800,225,0292 . 973,379,2690 . Fax: 973,912,9433